Handwritten Newspapers : Interdisciplinary Perspectives on a Social Practice

Salmi-Niklander, Kirsti

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Heiko Droste
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2729-0656

Kirsti Salmi-Niklander
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0552-1801

Handwritten Newspapers. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on a Social Practice

The handwritten newspaper, as yet little studied, is a multi-faceted genre of scribal culture. It originated as an exclusive news service in the 16th century. It was then adapted to the changing 17th-century news market and the introduction of printed newspapers. Between the Enlightenment and the 20th century, handwritten newspapers served both the internal communication needs of small groups and communities, as well as the need for political debate.

This book is the first edited volume focusing on handwritten newspapers from a wide historical, international and interdisciplinary perspective. The editors have conducted long-term research on early modern printed and handwritten newspapers (Heiko Droste), and handwritten newspapers during the modern period (Kirsti Salmi-Niklander). The participants of a workshop in Uppsala in September 2015 discussed handwritten newspapers from different disciplinary perspectives (history, folklore studies, literary history, and media history), raising various research questions. However, our primary focus in this volume is on handwritten newspapers as a social practice and their role in literary cultures. Our aim is to contextualize the material with regard to how it relates to political, cultural, and economic history. The analysis reveals both continuity and change in line with the different forms and functions of the material.

To allow for comparison we started by discussing definitions and generic features. How should a handwritten newspaper be defined? What demarcates it from other genres of scribal publication, and from personal writings? How have writers and readers termed the papers (e.g. *nouvelles à la main* in 18th-century France, *lagsavis* in the Norwegian Labour Movement)? These questions can be addressed in various ways: analytically by discussing contemporary debates on handwritten newspapers based on generic markers such as titles, editors, and type of layout (columns or other imitations of printed papers), and not least by categorizing the content (news, advertisements, leaders, essays).

Another common ground was our focus on the writer's interests and motives: Why were handwritten newspapers still produced after the introduction of the printed press? How did the handwritten newspaper adapt to a changing news market? What role does censorship play? Were

handwritten newspapers a means of creating an avant-garde medium for literary and artistic experiment, or for literary and editorial training? Alternatively, should we highlight its functions as a means of creating cohesion in small groups and promoting the use of vernacular language, or with an eye on the production of documents for future historical research?

Finally, we considered some material aspects. What distinctive practices related to the production of handwritten newspapers? How were these newspapers edited, published and distributed? How and where have they been archived? How are they related to printed publications and other forms of copying (hectograph, lithograph)?

The time span ranges from the 16th to the early 20th century, and the material includes case studies from various countries in Europe (Finland, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Romania/Hungary, and Sweden), from the United States, and St. Barthélemy (Caribbean). Handwritten newspapers can be put into perspective in these different societies in the contexts of colonialism, socialism, nationalism, and religion.

Distinctions

Research on handwritten newspapers as a genre follows a number of defining distinctions. The most obvious one is that between early modern and modern material, which follows institutional settings at universities. It is a distinction that is based to some extent on the genre's changing design. Early modern newspapers tended to resemble personal letters, even though they could be produced in hundreds of copies.[1] The situation was the opposite in 19th- and 20th-century handwritten newspapers: they tended to imitate printed papers in terms of layout and content, giving the impression of being "real" newspapers with an established circulation, even though they were generally produced as one single manuscript copy.[2] This distinction is also reflected in the different readerships. Handwritten newspapers in early modern times were addressed to social elites, members of which were the only people who could afford their rather high prices. Handwritten newspapers in the 19th and 20th centuries, on the other hand, met the needs of social and political groups that, for different reasons, were marginalized or at least not part of any social or political elite.

The same distinction is also marked in the content of handwritten newspapers. Social elites were interested in news about other elites, particularly in court circles, thereby reaching out for more knowledge of their world. The newspapers thus served as a medium for enhancing understanding of contemporary history. More or less marginalized, sometimes clandestine groups in modern times used handwritten newspapers as a means of internal communication as well as social cohesion. This change in content thus signifies how the handwritten newspaper lost in terms of social recognition,

1 Love 1993, 9–12.
2 Cf. the chapter by Klimis Mastoridis in this volume.

changing from an expensive luxury to a rather mundane medium of communication.

For all of these differences, the 18th century represents a dividing line in the history of the genre, which could also explain why there are so few studies on 18th-century material. The purpose of the handwritten newspaper was somehow vague or shifting. The most prominent study on French material conducted by Robert Darnton emphasizes the clandestine character of French handwritten newspapers as a means of critical political discourse.[3] Two older German studies carried out by Ulrich Blindow[4] and Lore Sporhan-Krempel[5] on Berlin and Nürnberg, respectively, also stress the function of spreading sensitive news on matters of politics. However, in these cases the handwritten newspaper did not serve distinct political goals, but was rather a means of acquiring more exclusive news than the printed material could offer – due to the hardening state censorship.[6] It is obvious, however, that the public handwritten newspaper turned into something else, something private, although the exact meaning of this privacy is hard to pinpoint. This new sphere could be described as a semi-public (or semi-private) sphere, related to the expansion of literacy and the rise of popular movements in different European countries and in North America.

The early modern perspective

Most researchers clearly argue from an early modern perspective, analyzing the medium as part of a future that is framed by the Habermasian public sphere and an on-going state-building process. This framework is applied on all early modern material and inevitably demands an audience and public debate, thereby promoting the role of the (printed and handwritten) newspaper as part of a political discourse. Politics, in turn, requires a society, according to the definition of politics as power-based decision-making aimed at the formation of a social community.[7] The early modern handwritten newspaper is, unsurprisingly, largely a research object among historians, with few exceptions[8], analyzing a medium for political debate and information on politics, a medium that reaches outwards – into a more or less well defined publicness.[9]

Handwritten newspapers of the last 200 years, on the other hand, have generally attracted scholars of literature, ethnology, sociolinguistics, and cultural anthropology. Their studies follow new agendas, answer other questions, and offer different results that focus mainly on the social and

3 Darnton 2010a; 2000b.
4 Blindow 1939.
5 Sporhan-Krempel 1968.
6 Both studies therefore mostly concern censorship material from Berlin and Nürnberg. Cf. also Belo 2004.
7 Schlögl 2008, footnote 36.
8 Böning 2011.
9 Cf. Droste's chapter in this volume and Droste 2018.

literary aspects of the medium. The present volume clearly shows this shift in interest. So far, researchers working on early modern and modern handwritten newspapers have hardly talked to each other, which is why we as the organizers of this project distinctly invited scholars from different countries and different academic disciplines who have been doing research on handwritten newspapers from the 16th to the 20th century. The workshop presentations demonstrated obvious changes in the use and functions of handwritten newspapers in the long run, and not only due to dramatic changes in the news market in the last 500 years. There are, however, equally obvious similarities, which tend to disappear behind institutional settings that distinguish early modern from modern history, as well as the respective research materials.

As a result, the long-term perspective on handwritten newspapers is so far missing, and not only due to a lack of interest. Equally important is the fact that many studies are not very explicit in defining their source material. There are only a few discussions about the genre itself, and most studies do not address that question at all. In that respect, Michał Salamonik's chapter on the first Polish printed newspapers is of interest. The editor of that newspaper had been publishing a handwritten newspaper for quite some time before, for unknown reasons, engaging in editing a printed version, which existed for only a few months. However, he gives an extensive explanation of the significance of the printed newspaper, which conveys a lot about his understanding of both the handwritten and the printed material.

Most researchers argue their case on the basis of one particular collection of what is labeled handwritten newspapers or journals, manuscript newspapers, newsletters and such. On top of that, comparison suffers from shady concepts such as politics or the juxtaposition of the public sphere vs. privacy. The modern understanding of these terms has developed since the 18th century; nevertheless they are often used even for material from the 16th and 17th centuries without further explanation of their contemporary understanding.

The public sphere in particular has been the subject of intense debate among German early modern historians, without any clear result.[10] Nonetheless, early modern handwritten newspapers are still considered a medium for public debate. As a consequence, newspaper historians tend to predate the modern notion of a public sphere interested in politics.[11] Most of them simply cannot think of any other reason for reading newspapers, and therefore regularly focus on the "political" content. There are reasons to question this premeditated understanding. The chapter written by Heiko Droste casts doubt on these assumptions and offers a different interpretation, largely based on an analysis of the contemporary discourse on printed newspapers and the court culture.

10 Schlögl 2014 returns in his seminal study on present and absentees to an understanding that changes between publicness and publicity, within the limits of social groups and arenas.

11 Ettinghausen 2015; Behringer 2002, 429.

Heiko Droste asks his audience, metaphorically, to turn around in time and to try to understand even early modern newspapers as a medium for social cohesion and a form of literature. In this way he promotes a different understanding of the early modern material. There are obvious traditions and recurrent features, despite the genre's development over time. These traditions tend to disappear as the research questions change, not least because the terms of the investigations are different or are differently applied by scholars of early modern and modern handwritten newspapers. From this perspective, notions of publicness and the public gain a new meaning. Handwritten newspapers were both public and socially embedded.

News and information

Although one might meaningfully assume that handwritten – and printed for that matter – newspapers were a means of disseminating information, there is more about them and their consumption than the presumed professional interests of different consumer groups suggest. New studies on the so-called *Fuggerzeitungen* – the most renowned German collection of handwritten newspapers from the 16th century – show clearly that this particular one was not designed with the economic interests of this merchant family in mind, as had been assumed for decades.[12] The Fugger needed many more news sources to meet their business needs:

> The proportion of economic reports in the *Wiener Fuggerzeitungen* is by no means large enough to constitute an adequate economic information service, making it impossible to maintain the notion that the family's economic decision-making could have been based solely or even principally on the *Fuggerzeitungen*. The *Fuggerzeitungen* cover a multitude of topics.[13]

This also applies to the use of printed newspapers and their functions in the context of the court society. Contrary to our expectations, the newspapers contain rather little information on matters such as ceremonies, representations, and public displays of power, which according to early modern notions of politics were central in terms of understanding of court society. This information was given instead in other media forms.[14] Similar results are to be expected with regard to the content of handwritten newspapers, although so far there have been few studies comparing the content of both genres.[15] However, it seems that all known public news forms covered a rather similar collection of subjects, and shared a common understanding about what was important news in terms of public affairs, with few differences between handwritten and printed newspapers.[16]

12 Zwierlein 2011; cf. also Šimeček 1987, 76; Keller 2012.
13 Schobesberger 2016, 218. A similar comment appears in Sporhan-Krempel 1968, 30.
14 Bauer 2011; 2010, 187–191.
15 Böning 2008.
16 Cf. Droste's chapter in this volume.

Hence, the two genres are rather similar in that both were censored to protect the honor of the Prince and the authorities, as well as the neighboring princes and authorities. It seems that this censorship was less vigorous in the case of handwritten newspapers, which were more open to rumor and unsubstantiated reports that were often marked as unconfirmed. Handwritten newspapers could also accommodate last-minute updates – there was nothing like an original given that all copies were made by hand. It was therefore possible to add the latest news, and to include items that were meant for certain customers.

These striking similarities between handwritten and printed newspapers in the 17th century have caused problems for researchers. Why were there handwritten newspapers in the first place, given that the printed versions offered almost the same news at a far lower price? For one thing, the printing process took a lot of time, which gave the handwritten newspaper a head start: "Therefore, if you make an effort to get a copy [of some important news] on one day, this news probably will be printed in the common gazette the very next day."[17]

There is also the question of exclusiveness, reflecting the conspicuous news consumption of the social elite as a marker of social status. In that respect, the focus on content is misleading. The handwritten newspaper was a social marker, accessible to just a few privileged customer groups. The readers did get some news that did not reach the same audience as the printed versions, but the focus was about the same. The above-mentioned possibility to adjust the content of the handwritten newspaper to certain customers by way of taking in the very latest news is also significant. The fact that the handwritten newspaper regularly referred to the content of the printed version, which in many cases had the same editor, may have given it the exclusivity its customers treasured.

Strangely enough, although the handwritten newspaper had clear features and a particular function within the news consumption of social elites, contemporary interest in newspapers has focused mainly on the printed versions (Michał Salamonik). Treatises on printed newspapers appeared when the genre's audience reached beyond the social elites. Contrary to our perceptions, once again these discourses on newspapers and news in general did not focus on politics as a distinct sphere of society and government. Instead, they refer to a news medium that covers contemporary history, a history in the making that concerns the common good and public affairs. The assumed reader, the audience, is described as belonging to social groups that take care of these matters, the public elite.

In line with this focus on a privileged readership, most of the works strongly emphasized the didactical value of the newspaper, especially for younger members of the social elites. It was the dissemination outside of these elites that troubled contemporary thinkers given that public affairs were not to be discussed beyond these circles. Mere curiosity was not acceptable in the case of private groups. The handwritten newspaper was

17 Ludewig 1705, § 4.

hardly mentioned in this debate, the assumption being that its high price made it inaccessible to anyone beyond its elite audience. These newspapers were rather perceived as an internal medium, publishing news on public affairs for members of social elites who were the only people who could afford to buy them. It was thus the public display of handwritten newspapers in coffee houses that triggered general prohibitions in the 18th century.[18]

The handwritten newspaper – as had long been the case with the printed newspaper – was thus a socially embedded medium addressed to a public consisting of social groups holding public office. Social embeddedness and publicness are thus by no means a contradiction in terms, as it might appear from the perspective of modern society in which publicness as an abstract idea by definition encompasses all social groups. This notion does not make much sense with regard to early modern times, however, when there was no such thing as an abstract public sphere or a single society. The number of available handwritten *and* printed newspapers, their rather limited runs, and the high demands for literacy among their readers reduced the reading public to a very small elite. In any case, publicity was scarcely more than a theoretical option up until the 18th century, possibly achieved in cities such Hamburg and Amsterdam with their wide variety of almost daily publications. Even so, it is not clear what interest artisans would have had in handwritten newspapers, which did not report on their life-world or on local affairs.

Contemporaneity and participation

Newspapers, printed as well as handwritten, were about participation in an elite culture. The reader marked his or her belonging to this social elite by learning about on-going history at the same time as other members, in other words the public. This novel, "simultaneous" (depending on the speed and reliability of the postal services) participation in an elite culture gave rise to something like contemporaneity, which stretched over most parts of Europe.[19] It created a new mental map for those who learned about changes in all of the known world at the same time as other members of public elites did.[20]

This contemporaneity and participation demanded of the public elites a variety of news contacts and media forms. Handwritten newspapers were read among friends alongside printed newspapers, particular news-sheets and correspondence. All these different media served specific purposes and should be understood as fostering a more or less diversified news consumption. In that respect, the variety of news sources depended

18 Droste 2011.

19 Dooley (ed.) 2010.

20 Zsuzsa Barbarics-Hermanik has worked on early 16th-century newspapers, which were circulated within networks as a means of transcultural communication in the Ottoman Empire; Barbarics-Hermanik 2010; 2011.

specifically on the readers' social status, literacy, economic means and place of residence (preferably at or close to one of rather few news nodes).[21]

Most studies on news, however, are limited to one genre, generally the printed newspaper although early modern writings are clear about the need to engage in different news forms. What is more, engaging in news did not merely entail passive consumption.[22] It was a marker for the reader's resources in that it demanded active news exchange, which in turn created and strengthened social structures. These social structures were the fabric of institutionalization processes in early modern times:

> The flow of correspondence that was mediated by the postal network, was a key to the integration of large scale economic and political institutional projects that increasingly had an impact on the everyday life in the communities. In itself, the postal network provided the correspondence networks, that transformed the mechanisms of social networks within a local environment and face-to-face relation such as trust, reputation, reciprocity, into the "virtual communities" that were taking shape as correspondence networks.[23]

This still seems to be an appropriate description of contemporary societies. What has changed since early modern times is the definition of publicness and society. Extending the outreach of handwritten newspapers, it turned the genre into a medium for rather small, marginalized social groups instead of social and public elites. However, this process is still not sufficiently understood. Did the handwritten newspaper lose its grip on elites? Was it eventually marginalized by censorship? Did the modern idea of one society de-legitimize a medium that was not meant to serve a socially diversified public?

The market for news

There is another difference that needs to be explained. Up until the 18th century, the handwritten newspaper was not only a means of social exchange, it was also a commodity, part of a news market that followed the economic rationale of the social groups that were engaged in it. It was, to some extent, a money-based economy in that news was a commodity that could be traded for money. The price of this commodity was about ten times higher than that of the printed newspaper. In that respect, the latter was obviously a legitimate offspring, although it by no means ended the need for handwritten versions. On the contrary, it seems as if the market for handwritten newspapers grew in the 17th and early 18th centuries alongside that for printed newspapers. They were regular market products, openly sold to customers who could afford them. They were censored and were considered part of the news market just like the printed newspaper.

21 Cf. Lamal, forthcoming, presenting a study on handwritten newspapers in 16th-century Italy.
22 Droste 2018.
23 Simonson 2009, 385.

It is problematic for researchers to describe the financial conditions of this business, and even more so with regard to its traders. There are far too few account records from news agents to make general statements on the profitability of this business.[24] It is known what the cost of a subscription to a handwritten newspaper was in the 17th and 18th centuries. They were obviously sold in major merchant cities, post offices, and other places. However, nothing is known about the run, which might have fluctuated heavily given there was nothing like an original.

This market for newspapers, handwritten as well as printed, did not alter the rules of socially embedded news exchange. It was still an aspect of social relations, in that investment in news fostered social relations and generated credit, and was thus mutually beneficial. It was – in a way – part of business without necessarily being business in itself. It seems as if news was – as it still is – less of a commodity and more of an investment in trust and mutual benefit. The exchange of news was therefore one way of developing social relationships and networks among court members, scholars[25], priests, and women[26]. In light of the social embeddedness of news as well as newspapers, one has to look for a different economy, one that is based on social resources and extends far beyond the public news market. One should think of resources in terms of trust, networks, and the ability to communicate with absent friends at a time when social contacts primarily focused on presence. Early modern institutionalization processes, foremost among them being the state-building process, were based on a social fabric of family, friends, and networks. These social institutions and their terms were described in a flood of treatises and educational writings.

The history of the handwritten newspaper as a commodity

It is claimed that handwritten newspapers started with news exchanged among merchants as part of their mutual correspondence.[27] They belonged to the world of internationally active merchants with an interest in events happening at other places that might affect their trade. This notion about their origins serves to justify the explanations offered by contemporaries as well as modern researchers. In fact, there is limited evidence to back this claim, apart from a few merchant archives such as the Datini[28], Fugger,

24 Even the very thorough studies conducted by Mario Infelise on handwritten newspapers in Italy do not pinpoint the income that the newspaper services generated, not least because there is very little information on news traders and their different business interests; Infelise 2010, 52. Lore Sporhan-Krempel showed in her study on Georg Forstenheuser, Nürnberg's most renowned news agent, that the news trade was part of a varied and probably far more profitable business; Sporhan-Krempel 1970.

25 Greengrass, Leslie & Raylor (eds) 1994; Bots & Waquet (eds) 1994; Stegeman 2005.

26 Pal 2012.

27 Werner 1975.

28 Origo 1957.

and Veckinchusen[29]. Nevertheless the assumption has merit, although the focus of the news frequently seemed to be the "world" and the "present day", instead of the particular interests of the participants. It looks as if there was similar news exchange between German courts, at least from the 16th century onwards.[30]

Another explanation for the origins of the periodical distribution of news as a commodity lies in Italy and the early diplomacy of Italian city states.[31] It may be that there were two different beginnings, the spheres of international commerce and international diplomacy. Given that much of the "diplomatic" news was still sent by merchants even in the 17th century,[32] these two explanations could be two sides of the same coin. There is as yet, however, too little evidence to resolve the issue. In any case, it is evident that handwritten and – later on – printed newspapers were mainly restricted to merchant cities, which also harbored the main postal offices that, in turn, formed the grid of an expanding European news market.[33] Contemporary writing therefore referred to merchants as *custodes novellarum*,[34] newspapers' protectors, although it is not clear if this refers to the merchants' role as producers and/or consumers. The label seemed to need no further explanation and was obviously widely accepted.

We therefore have to come back to the question of definition. What is it that distinguished the handwritten newspaper from a handwritten news-sheet or a letter of correspondence sent in a mutual news relationship? Although the printed newspaper with an (often changing) title, numbering, and periodicity is an easily identifiable product, both the letter of correspondence and the handwritten newspaper shared a number of typical markers. They were handwritten, often short and anonymous, lacked a title (although they usually had a headline stating the place and day of issue), and were periodical – according to the rhythm of the postal services. Few contemporary discussions about the handwritten newspaper survive. It was apparently considered a specific product. However, it was not taken as seriously as the printed newspaper, which after about half a century into its existence caused a rising tide of critical discourse on its use, lack of usefulness, supposed as well as legitimate readership, and quality. This discussion might serve as a reminder that our – researchers' – focus on newspaper content is misleading. Handwritten newspapers have always been a medium for social exchange and cohesion, and internal communication, and in that way they are both public and private.

Change happened when the need for social cohesion came up against the concept of a nation-state and politics that, unlike early modern

29 Lindemann 1978.
30 Kleinpaul 1930.
31 Mattingly 1955; Infelise 2010; Zwierlein (2006) attempts to show that early modern newspapers derive from diplomatic sources, in Italy.
32 Cf. the study by Droste 2018.
33 Behringer 2010, 51; Cowan 2007; Raymond & Moxham (eds) 2016.
34 Weise 1676, Chapter 1, folio A r. The term was used by Jürgen Habermas (1989, 20) to highlight the importance of economic change in explaining the change in public debate.

societies, feared public debate on politics and instead relied more and more on censorship. This is illustrated by Fredrik Thomasson, who analyzes handwritten newspapers in the Swedish colony of Saint Barthélemy in the early 19th century. The Swedish Crown tried to ban all kinds of public debate, by means of censorship and the strict control of access to the printing press. This handwritten newspaper thus acquired a different function, in addition to its role as a medium of social exchange and cohesion: it was used to replace the printed newspaper – and was consequently designed as such. Censorship and the policing of handwritten newspapers became meaningful.

Continuities and discontinuities

Thus, the handwritten newspapers of early modern times and of the modern period have some features in common besides the basic idea of writing a newspaper by hand. In Western Europe, the scribal culture flourished in aristocratic coteries, religious sects and revolutionary movements during the 17th and 18th centuries.[35] News correspondence, commonplace books and other genres of early modern scribal media closely resemble the handwritten newspapers of the long 19th century.

A major feature distinguishing early modern and modern handwritten newspapers is the title. Unlike the former, almost all modern handwritten newspapers have titles, which are a strong generic marker. The material form and layout of these newspapers varied considerably: some were visually very elaborate, others were written in empty ledgers without any columns or illustrations. *Lagsavise* edited by Norwegian labor movements were sometimes a collection of loose sheets wrapped together in an envelope, as Christian Berrenberg points out in the chapter co-written with Kirsti Salmi-Niklander. However, all these papers have titles, dates and the names of the editors, which distinguish them from other kinds of manuscript materials.

Another distinctive feature of modern handwritten newspapers is the process of editing and distribution, which tended to be collective and involved intense interaction between manuscript, print and oral communication and performance. Kirsti Salmi-Niklander, Christian Berrenberg, Hrafnkell Lárusson and Risto Turunen explore handwritten newspapers in Finnish, Norwegian and Icelandic local communities and popular movements during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even though the traditions in these countries differ somewhat, many parallel features can be observed. In most cases the newspapers were edited as a single manuscript copy, which was published by being read aloud in meetings or at more informal gatherings. Sometimes the writers addressed their words to the listeners rather than the readers of the paper. Many handwritten newspapers in Iceland circulated from house to house in villages; Emese Ilyefalvi refers to a similar practice in the chapter on manuscript papers edited and distributed by Calvinist minister Dezső Bonczidai in Hungarian villages in Transylvania.

35 Darnton 2000a; Ezell 1993; 1999; Gelbart 1987; Love 1993.

Practices of collaborative writing and oral-literary communication have their roots in early modern cultural phenomena. The salon culture involved various oral-literary practices: texts were published by being read aloud, and manuscripts were circulated among salon members. Handwritten newspapers [*nouvelles á la main*] were produced and distributed in salons in 18th-century France.[36] These oral-literary practices were adopted by popular movements in later centuries. Another predecessor of modern handwritten newspapers was the formalized correspondence in religious sects and political networks,[37] but unfortunately there is hardly any evidence of this social use of such newspapers in the 16th and 17th centuries.

New literary practices

Change is partially attributable to the fact that during the early 19th century the medium "declined" to a pastime and an educational activity for children and young people in families, schools and other educational settings.[38] This is the same process that memory books went through during the 19th and 20th centuries.[39] Apparently, some writers of school and family papers were familiar with the earlier traditions of newsletters and circular letters in religious movements.[40] The earliest archived example of a family paper in Finland was edited by Karl August Gottlund in his home, a parsonage in Juva in Eastern Finland, as a young teenager in 1810–1811.[41] Entitled *Jockas-Posten*, it bore some resemblance to 18th-century handwritten newspapers: small events in the social life of the family and the neighborhood were turned into items of news with royal characters. At the end of each year, "a key" was published revealing the real identity behind the pseudonyms. Robert Darnton observed similar systems of pseudonyms and "keys" in 18th-century French libels and clandestine writings.[42]

For political, practical or educational reasons, handwritten newspapers have survived or have been revitalized as an alternative medium for adults, often but not always young adults. They became a popular alternative medium in North America, especially in remote, isolated settlements in

36 Dulong 1993, 410–413; Klitgaard Povlsen 1993, 19–22; Goodman 1989, 340–347.

37 In Finland, theological dialogues by the Lutheran clergyman Abraham Achrenius (1706–1769), *Conventioner af Gamla och Nya Saker*, were distributed by mail among a circle of correspondents in the 1760s. Achrenius argued against the Moravian (Herrnhutian) Brethren, but the model of his journal was adopted from *Gemein-Nachrichten*, a correspondence journal circulated by the Herrnhutians in Germany. Similar journals were produced in Sweden and distributed in Finland. Mäkinen 1997, 126–127; Ruuth 1921, 146–148; Salmi-Niklander 2013, 77.

38 Heuschen 2006.

39 Henriksson 2007.

40 Salmi-Niklander 2004, 103–104.

41 Haavikko 1998, 199–200.

42 Darnton 2010b, 370–374.

both English-speaking and immigrant communities.[43] They were also a strong tradition in middle-class families. Mark Alan Mattes explores several collections of family papers written by young people in early and mid-19th-century US, interpreting them through the term "intermedial literacy" and focusing on the interaction of scribal and oral media and authorship.

Handwritten newspapers coincided or were replaced with some other educational and informative practices in North America: amateur journalism, which involved the so-called "novelty presses" or "toy presses," marketed to middle-class families in late 19th-century US. Teenagers and young adults could make a limited number of prints with these small hand presses, and they distributed them among a network of correspondents.[44] Another popular 19th-century tradition was the use of scrapbooks for both educational and political purposes.[45]

Handwritten newspapers have been edited in isolated communities such as boarding schools, sanatoriums, garrisons, prisons, people in exile, and even in concentration camps.[46] In such settings they served as a means for discussing inner tensions and maintaining mental capacities and hope for the future. Mary Isbell focuses on *The Young Idea*, written on board England's Royal Navy flagship, HMS *Chesapeake* in 1857–1859. This was both an intimate and a truly global medium, as officers, clerks and seamen depict their experiences on the voyages and in exotic harbor cities on the Arabian Peninsula and India. *The Young Idea* is an example of shipboard publishing, which was a common pastime both on long-distance passenger ships to Australia and New Zealand, and on Arctic explorations.[47]

Handwritten newspapers as a means of literary attainment, political education, and agitation

During the long 19th century, handwritten newspapers became a significant alternative medium for rural populations and urban working classes, supporting the attainment of literacy skills, political activism and democracy. The scribal culture of the working classes and rural populations has become a topic of interdisciplinary research in recent decades. Martyn Lyons coined the term "ordinary writings" that, he points out, reveal the emotions and experiences of their writers only to a limited extent: "Proletarian writings were characteristically laconic, pragmatic, concerned more with the price of

43 Atwood 1999; Radner 2010. On handwritten newspapers in Finnish immigrant communities, see Salmi-Niklander 2017.

44 Isaac 2016.

45 Garvey 2013.

46 Handwritten newspapers were edited by Finnish left-wing political prisoners in the 1920s and 1930s (Salmi-Niklander 1989; Kähkönen 2011) and by Greek political exiles in 1938–1943 (Kenna 2008). *Vedem* was written by teenage boys in the Theresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp in 1942–1944. Klein 1965.

47 Hoag 2001; de Schmidt 2016.

essential goods than with personal feelings."[48] Contributors to handwritten newspapers rarely write about their personal emotions, but rather discuss collective experiences and tensions in local communities.

Handwritten newspapers served democratization processes and the political participation of the lower classes. Editorial tasks circulated among members in many communities, and all who belonged to the small community or society were expected (or even obliged) to contribute. However, the editors and the most active writers were among the most highly educated members of the community, albeit they tended to be autodidacts rather than formally educated. Another common trend in various case studies is the dominance of men in the editing process, even in mixed groups of men and women.[49] The editing and writing process could have proceeded in a dialogue between men and women.[50]

In many cases, handwritten newspapers were produced to avoid censorship. This was the situation in Finland during the 19th century, when all printed materials were subject to censorship: the first publications of the labor unions of pressmen in the late 19th century were edited handwritten newspapers, even though they could easily have produced a printed paper.[51] Avoiding censorship was only one reason for their popularity: they served as means of strengthening collective identities and discussing delicate issues in local communities. In fact, they may have been censored (both internally and externally), as Risto Turunen shows in the chapter on papers edited by workers at the Finlayson cotton factory in Tampere.

The chapters comprising this volume report many case studies on handwritten newspapers in various European countries. Klimis Mastoridis gives a long-term overview of their appearance in Greek history from the early 19th century until the Second World War, discussing their material forms and social functions in different historical contexts. Hrafnkell Lárusson focuses on extensive Icelandic materials produced by local associations in small villages. These journals were a vital part of the scribal culture, which flourished in Iceland until the 20th century. Kirsti Salmi-Niklander and Christian Berrenberg present a comparative analysis of handwritten newspapers in Finnish student organizations and in the Finnish and Norwegian labor movements, addressing questions such as how these newspapers were used to create, strengthen and maintain a community identity. The terms social authorship and literary/literacy practice are used to explain different aspects of these processes. Emese Ilyefalvi and Risto Turunen report on case studies of the last phase of handwritten newspapers

48 Lyons 2013, 17. The term "ordinary writings", coined by Martyn Lyons (2013, 13–14) is based on the term *écritures ordinaires* introduced by Daniel Fabre. Albert & Fabre 1993. Ordinary writings and scribal cultures in the Nordic countries have been explored in multidisciplinary projects and publications. See Kuismin & Driscoll (eds) 2013.

49 Salmi-Niklander 2004; 2011.

50 Risto Turunen reports on the dialogue of men and women in working-class communities in his chapter. See also Salmi-Niklander 2004, 381–384, 435–441; 2011.

51 Salmi-Niklander 2004, 112.

during the first decades of the 20th century. They explore their significance in political and religious communication in relation to class, ethnicity, and ideology.

Archiving, editing, and digitization

Handwritten newspapers constitute a challenging topic of research in many ways. The source materials are often "hidden" in the archives, and they are classified in many different ways: as "Miscellania", "Varia", "Correspondence," "Publications" or "Manuscripts." Many of these papers were clandestine, hidden or even destroyed by their writers and editors. On the other hand, they have not been valued as documents in the same manner as minutes of meetings and membership records, given that their content tends to be humorous and fictional, and therefore difficult to interpret.

One example is the story about the preservation of *Valistaja*, a handwritten newspaper edited by young people in the industrial town of Högfors[52] in Southern Finland in 1914–1925, and the primary research material for Kirsti Salmi-Niklander's doctoral thesis. The newspaper was confiscated by the police in 1926, following the banning of the socialist youth club because it had chosen the communist turn in the division of the Finnish labor movement. The collection was found by accident in the attic of the local police station in the 1980s. The policeman who found it later admitted that he had kept the collection in his cupboard for some years and had read these interesting stories, finally handing in the manuscripts to the local Social Democratic Organization. In 1989 Kirsti Salmi-Niklander came across this collection, which comprised 550 pages, only about half of the original corpus. The first methodological challenge was to date the materials and put together the loose sheets. This was followed by a multi-phased generic, intertextual and narrative analysis.[53]

All researchers in the field of handwritten newspapers have similar stories to tell about miraculously saved or accidentally discovered source materials and multi-phased processes of interpretation and contextualization. Many chapters in this volume are based on relatively small, fragmentary or second-hand archival collections, of which only reproductions of the original texts are available (Fredrik Thomasson, Mary Isbell, Mark Alan Mattes, Klimis Mastoridis, Emese Ilyefalvi). These fragmentary materials demand careful interpretation and contextualization. Some other chapters discuss relatively extensive, but nevertheless fragmentary source materials (Hrafnkell Lárusson, Risto Turunen, Kirsti Salmi-Niklander and Christian Berrenberg). Methodological challenges in their interpretation and analysis are related to vernacular and nonstandard language, irony and parody, and references to local people and events. This interpretation and contextualization require

52 Högfors has been known as Karkkila since 1932 when it became an independent township.

53 Salmi-Niklander 2004, 15, 86–87. *Valistaja* is now in the collections of the Labor Archives in Helsinki.

comparative research based on different source materials. Methodologies in the fields of historical and literary research, book and media history, folklore studies and ethnology provide tools for this analysis.

Digital humanities open up new possibilities for the study of both extensive and fragmented archival collections. Mary Isbell has explored the opportunities emanating from the Text Encoding Initiative and digital scholarly editing for the analysis of both the material and textual aspects of handwritten newspapers. Her research on the digital edition of *The Young Idea* also involved project work with university students.[54] Risto Turunen applies computational methods to the content analysis of socialist handwritten newspapers of early 20th-century Finland.[55] Those involved in the Handwritten Newspapers Project, which was instigated by Roy A. Atwood, have collected information and digital editions from North America in the main, but also from various other countries.[56] The database Literary Bonds (University of Strathclyde) presents digitized editions of handwritten newspapers edited in Scottish literary and mutual improvement societies in late 19th and early 20th centuries.[57] The Finnish Literature Society has recently given access to internet-based learning material on self-educated writers and vernacular literacy in 19th-century Finland, including a section focusing on handwritten newspapers.[58] Digital methods provide the means for exploring visual, linguistic, generic and intertextual elements of handwritten newspapers.

We hope that this volume will open up the path for international co-operation in this exciting field of research. Many institutions and individuals have helped and supported us during the editing process. The workshop in Uppsala 2015 was funded by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences and the Academy of Finland. The editorial work has been supported by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki. Special thanks to Ms Seita Soininen for assistance during the editing process. Kirsti Salmi-Niklander's research was funded through the Academy of Finland fellowship ("Between voice and paper: authorial and narrative strategies in oral-literary traditions," decision number 251289), and Heiko Droste's research was funded by The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies. We appreciate the insightful comments of our peer reviewers, which helped us to improve the final version of the volume. We are grateful to the contributors for their chapters and for smooth co-operation and patience in the editorial process. Last but not least, we wish to extend our sincere gratitude to the Finnish Literature Society for publishing the volume in its *Studia Fennica Historica* series.

54 Isbell 2016.

55 Turunen 2016.

56 https://handwrittennews.com/

57 https://www.literarybonds.org. Weiss 2016. The database has been developed by Kirstie Blair and Lauren Weiss (University of Strathclyde) and Michael Sanders (University of Manchester).

58 https://kynallakyntajat.finlit.fi/tekstilajit/k%C3%A4sinkirjoitetut-lehdet
The section on handwritten newspapers is based on Kirsti Salmi-Niklander's research.

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